



# Press Release

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**Contact name: Kelly LoTempio, Business  
Development Specialist/Public Information Officer**

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**Phone number: (716) 551-4301 ext. 309**

## **SBA's Small Business Week Award Winners** **Announced**

The Buffalo District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is pleased to announce the winners of the Small Business Week Awards for the year 2008. Small Business Week is an important time to showcase and recognize some of the most successful and inspiring entrepreneurs in Western New York.

Franklin Sciortino, Buffalo District Director said, "Buffalo's small businesses are becoming increasingly vital contributors to our economy. I am very proud that two of our Buffalo winners were selected as Regional winners". The Buffalo District is comprised of the 14 westernmost counties of New York State and Region II is comprised of New York State, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Each year since 1963, the President has proclaimed Small Business Week to recognize the contributions of many small businesses to strength and economic well-being of America. Through the work of entrepreneurs, jobs are created, families are given the opportunity for a better life, and whole communities are transformed. The Buffalo District will celebrate Small Business Week on May 11-17.

Michael Taylor, vice president and loan officer of the New York Business Development Corporation (NYBDC) and Empire State CDC has been named winner of the **Financial Services Champion of the Year Award for Region II, New York State, and the Buffalo District.**

Mike exemplifies in his capacity and is responsible for educating community and lending partners about loan programs available for small businesses, developing relationships with lending partners by participating in business development activities and direct calling to promote NYBDC and Empire State CDC loan programs with strong emphasis on lending partnerships that include SBA 504 and/or 7(a) loan programs.

Mike actively participates and speaks at the annual SBA Straight Talk series, as well as the SBA Matchmaker & Expo event. He volunteers to speak at various other SBA seminars throughout Western New York and is a member of the Region II Advisory Council.

Amy Castronova is the **Region II, New York State, and Buffalo Small Business Young Entrepreneur Champion of the Year.**

To be considered a young entrepreneur, the individual must serve as a majority owner and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with a three year track record, and who will not have reached the age of 30 by June 1, 2008.

Founded in 1989, Novatek supports large corporations and small companies, both nationally and locally, by designing and delivering customized e-learning, instructor-led training, webinars, software simulations, user manuals, service manuals, online help, and many other outputs of technical information.

Amy took over the reins of Novatek after the unexpected death of her mother who founded the company. She learned the ropes in one summer and purchased the company the following year. Since she graduated and has taken the helm, Novatek has experienced double-digit revenue growth every year; diversified clientele through new client acquisition; significantly expanded outside of the WNY market; and created a differentiated brand of technical writing and training that has earned the company a place as a top tier supplier to several major corporations. She is also a person who is deeply committed to giving back to the community and providing leadership direction for other young people like herself.

Sundra L. Ryce, president & CEO of SLR Contracting & Service Company, Inc. has been named **Buffalo District Minority Small Business Champion of the Year**. Earning this award, Sundra has fulfilled a commitment to support minority entrepreneurship.

Between juggling field operations, managing projects, and overseeing the sales and marketing team, Sundra still has time to travel cross-country as a motivational speaker and sits on various community boards. She is a mentor for the Buffalo Niagara Partnership-Woman to Woman, University of Buffalo-Minority and Women Emerging Entrepreneur Program, and the University Of Buffalo School Of Management. She is also a member of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership Board of Directors, Board of Trustees for the WNY Public Broadcasting Association, Univera Healthcare Regional Advisory Board, Buffalo State College Foundation Board and the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation Board of Directors. Sundra continues to share her entrepreneurial story and business acumen through workshops, seminars and keynote presentations.

Gerald J. Hace is being honored as the **District's Small Business Person of the Year**. As owner of Lockport community's oldest business and Niagara County's oldest printing company, Gerald and Gooding Company Inc. have continued to be an integral part of WNY's business community.

The company, established in 1876, was family-owned until Jerry purchased the company in 1990. Since purchasing the company, Gooding Company has embraced new technology and has changed its product mix to compete in the 90s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Gerald purchased Gooding Company knowing that it was antiquated technologically, but had a good client base that would provide time for conversion to a new and more modern company. The company continues to grow and over the last five-years has developed long-term strategic relationships with its clients selling primarily to the Pharmaceutical and Consumer Packaging Markets.

The **District's Small Business Exporter Champion of the Year** is Michael Diati, Vice President Speed Global Services. Speed Global Services is a full cycle global supply management specialist. Speed provides companies with full service logistics, specializing in international freight forwarding, transportation services, and warehousing and fulfillment. Established in 1946, Speed Global Services combines the experience and systems of a large provider with accountability, trust and personalized service of a smaller company.

Michael gives back to the community by offering monthly educational seminars on topics such as NAFTA, often providing international trade consulting services pro bono, and participating in local programs designed to assist exporters such as the NEBS program with the Canadian Consulate. Also, his belief in education encouraged Michael to provide educational seminars on international trade in the Buffalo area. Finally, by helping exporters realize increased opportunities for their business Speed Global Services has been able to employ and involve more individual in the international trade field in the area.

Horace Leon Miller, Sole Proprietor, HLM Landscaping and Snow Removal is being honored as the **Buffalo District Home-Based Business Champion of the Year**. This award honors individuals who have experienced the rewards and difficulties of owning a home-based business and have volunteered to improve the climate for these businesses.

Horace Miller began his in-home, lawn maintenance and snow plowing business three years ago. He started with little more than a rake, shovel, and lawn mower and maintained several lawns without charging fees in an

effort to develop a reputation for providing quality and reliable services. Since that time he has secured extensive equipment that has made it possible for him to expand his business from three, to thirty contracts.

The **District Women in Business Champion of the Year** is Loretta Kaminsky, assistant director, Canisius Women's Business Center. Loretta is known as a true role model of "get it done" action and "we will succeed" compassion. Her community contacts have enabled her to tap into a prestigious club of successful business leaders and practitioners to serve as volunteer coaches for the Center. And together with her director, Melinda Sanderson they have graduated over 35 women in the Center's unique business coaching program.

Loretta has been a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business, has served as Chairman of the Small Business Development Center National Advisory Board, Chairman of the New York State SBDC Advisory Board, Governor's NYS Small Business Advisory Board, National Key Bank for Women Advisory Board and National Advisory Board of the Center for Women's Business Research.

Michael Few, President of Contracts Unlimited has been selected as the **District Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year**. In late 1990 following his discharge from the United States Coast Guard, Michael started Contracts Unlimited, a fast-growing success story of Niagara County located in the town's industrial park. The company has three main lines: stripping and blanking supplies, laser cutting, job shop machining and metal fabrication, as well as folding carton supplies. The company has grown over the past 2 years, and has increased their employee base from 7 to 25, working 2-3 shifts as business dictates.

This year's **Small Business Journalist of the Year** honors Tom Adams of the Rochester Business Journal. On many occasions, Tom has participated as a reporter, and covered SBA and SCORE news, editorials, columns, and commentaries that highlight and analyze small business issues. His coverage has helped get the word out on small business and has increased public understanding of the importance of small business contributions to the economy.

Merrell A. Lane, President, Lane Funeral Home, Inc. is the **District's Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year**. Located in Niagara Falls, and established by Merrell's father after his return from service in World War II, Merrell has been a licensed funeral director since 1968 working with his brother in the family business.

Merrell is very involved in supporting the community in which he lives, the funeral profession of which he is part, and the military/veteran community through which he serves as chairman of the Niagara Military Affairs Council since its inception in 1996.

Merrell is a Veteran of the Vietnam War having served with the Army 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division from 1969-1970. He has received many awards and continues to work with our WNY Congressional Delegation in expanding the role of the Niagara Air Reserve Station. He received the Conspicuous Service Medal which is the highest military award in NYS that can be presented to a civilian.

Also, District Director Sciortino has announced two local awards which are designed to honor individuals, organizations, agencies, and/or businesses, which have made significant contributions to the local small business community.

Suzanne Reusch has been named one of the recipients of the SBA Buffalo District Director's Special Award for 2008. Suzanne is the regional representative for outreach services for the New York State Department of Taxation & Finance. Since 2000 she has served as a key speaker at monthly SCORE/SBA Small Business Assistance Workshops and has been involved in the District's Straight Talk Conference as both a speaker and a steering committee member. Suzanne's tax knowledge & experience have made her a vital part of the success of these programs.

Cynthia Krysztof will also be honored by District Director Sciortino for her contributions and support of the District's small businesses. Currently serving as Senior Stakeholder Liaison in the Small Business & Self Employment Division for the IRS, Cynthia is an advocate for small business interest and issues through Western & Central NY. She also supports and participates in recurring SBA/SCORE Small Business Assistance

Workshops and the annual Straight Talk Conference. Cynthia's willingness to share her expertise has been instrumental in the Buffalo District's ability to delivering quality programs.

The U.S. Small Business Administration congratulates all the winners and thanks them for their contribution to the WNY Small Business Community.

The winners will receive their awards during a Small Business recognition ceremony, which will be held in Buffalo. They will also be recognized on May 14, 2007 at a Small Business Week luncheon. The luncheon will be held at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center from 11:30-1:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$40 per seat or \$400 per table of 10. Please contact Kelly LoTempio, Business Development Specialist/Public Information Officer at (716) 551-4301 ext. 309 or by e-mail at [Kelly.lotempio@sba.gov](mailto:Kelly.lotempio@sba.gov) for reservations. You may also register on-line at <http://buffalo.bizjournals.com/buffalo/event/4202>.